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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 000155

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TAGS: [KFLU](#) [AEMR](#) [ASEC](#) [AMED](#) [CASC](#) [KFLO](#) [TBIO](#) [KSAF](#) [KPAO](#) [PREL](#)
PINR, AMGT, TF, BE
SUBJECT: BELGIUM: H1N1 CASES KEEP FALLING IN 2010

REF: 2009 BRUSSELS 1576

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SUMMARY

¶1. On January 28, 2010, the Government of Belgium's Interministerial Influenza Commission (IIC) announced an estimated 1,614 new cases of the H1N1 virus in Belgium for the week of January 12 to January 17 (week 3). This figure is marginally higher from an estimated 1,302 cases the previous week. Four additional H1N1-related deaths were reported between November x and December 31; in all, seventeen Belgians have died from H1N1-related causes since the outbreak began in spring 2009. The total estimated number of positive cases in Belgium since April 2009 is now 211,009. Health authorities caution that the virus could still return, as they believe a large portion of the population has not yet been exposed to the virus. The GOB is still encouraging individuals in at-risk groups to take advantage of the slowdown to get vaccinated; so far the government believes over approximately 1.5 to 2 million people have been vaccinated. Belgium has also renegotiated a reduction from its original H1N1 vaccine order from Glaxo Smith Kline (GSK), as well as donated ten percent of its remaining vaccines to the World Health Organization (WHO). End summary.

NUMBER OF NEW CASES REMAINS LOW IN JANUARY 2010

¶2. Since the H1N1 virus in Belgium reached its peak of positive cases the week of October 19-25, 2009 with 46,848 estimated cases, the number of cases has steadily decreased. During the first week of 2010, only 453 estimated cases were reported-the lowest number since the week of August 31 to September 6. Health authorities indicate the circulation of the virus has weakened, but still are encouraging at-risk groups to take advantage of the slowdown to get vaccinated.

NO DEATHS IN 2010; FOUR IN LAST WEEKS OF 2009, TOTAL OF 17

¶3. There have been no H1N1-related deaths to date in 2010. However, between Nov 23 and Dec 27, the IIC attributed four additional deaths to the virus, bringing the total since the onset of the epidemic to seventeen. According to the Scientific Institute of Public Health, the H1N1 virus has not had an impact on the country's mortality rate.

VACCINATION CAMPAIGN FOR MEDICAL RISK GROUPS STILL IN COURSE

¶4. The IIC reports that the vaccination of people from the medical risk groups is still underway. During January 2010, more than two million doses of vaccine have been delivered to general practitioners and healthcare institutions by the pharmacies. The IIC estimates that approximately 1.5 to 2 million persons have been

vaccinated.

BELGIUM TO DONATE 10 PERCENT OF VACCINE STOCK TO DEVELOPING NATIONS

15. Due to the surplus of the H1N1 vaccine in Belgium, the Belgian government has announced on January 8, 2010 to donate ten percent of its remaining vaccines to the World Health Organization (WHO). WHO will then distribute the donated vaccines to developing countries.

NEGOTIATION WITH GLASKO SMITH KLINE TO REDUCE ORDER

16. Originally having ordered 12.6 million doses of the vaccine from Glasko Smith Kline (GSK), the Government negotiated with GSK in early January to reduce its original order by one-third, to approximately 8 million units. The Ministry of Health confirms that as of January 8, GSK has delivered 4.3 units of the vaccine. The reduction will save Belgium approximately 33 million dollars.

EMBASSY H1N1 WORKING GROUP

17. The Embassy H1N1 Working Group (comprised of representatives from the Front Office, Health Unit, Management, CLO, RSO, PD and POLECON sections) reviewed Embassy preparedness in light of Belgium's H1N1 situation most recently on January 15. Its next scheduled meeting will be for February 26, unless the situation warrants an earlier meeting.

18. BELGIAN H1N1 CASES (ESTIMATED UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED*)

WEEK DATE NUMBER CASES CUMULATIVE
 NUMBER CASES

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03	JAN 11-17	1,614	211,009
02	JAN 4-10	1,302	209,395
01	DEC 28-JAN 3	453	208,093
52	DEC 21-27	1,865	207,640
51	DEC 14-20	2,091	205,775
50	DEC 7-13	4,482	203,684
49	NOV 30-DEC 6	5,403	199,202
48	NOV 23-29	8,192	193,799
47	NOV 16-22	11,882	186,855
46	NOV 9-15	17,850	174,973
45	NOV 2-8	33,584	155,908
44	OCT 26-NOV 1	50,415	127,379
43	OCT 19-25	41,193	77,609
42	OCT 12-18	16,377	36,416
41	OCT 5-11	7,584	20,039
40	SEP 28-OCT 4	3,997	12,455
39	SEP 21-27	1,763	8,458
39	SEP 21-27	1,763	8,458
38	SEP 14-20	905	6,695
37	SEP 7-13	456	5,790
36	AUG 31-SEP 6	402	5,334

(Source: Scientific Institute Public Health)

*total of individuals testing positive during that period

(Note: Belgium ceased individual testing for H1N1 in mid-July 2009, and since then has used extrapolations from a system relying on data based on cases of patients who visit the approximately 180 doctors who make up the so-called national H1N1 network.)

GUTMAN